

Listing of claims:

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:
permitting at least one customer ~~household~~ to select previously recorded music selections, that were previously recorded by the at least one customer ~~household~~ in a storage medium at a location of the customer, for unrestricted playback;
automatically receiving communicating unrestricted playback selection information regarding a previously recorded music selection from the at least one customer location ~~household~~ to at a central controller system when the previously recorded music selection has been played a predetermined number of times at a customer location or an indication is made by the customer that the music is selected for unrestricted playback, whichever occurs first; and
billing the at least one customer ~~household~~ for the recorded music selections that are selected for unrestricted playback based on the unrestricted playback selection information automatically received.
2. (currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising transmitting digital music content at data transmission rates faster than real time to the at least one customer households.
3. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said information includes music selection content availability, scheduling and content pricing data.
4. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 3, further comprising providing an interactive program guide via a display device for enabling customers to select available digital music content and select functions for recording said music content and functions for playing back recorded music content.
5. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 4, further comprising: receiving and decoding transmitted music selection and associated information and storing decoded music selections and associated information in a digital data storage device for temporary storage thereof.

6. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 5, further comprising providing remote access to said decoded content availability, scheduling and content pricing data, said remote access including a direct Internet access link to a website of the content provider or via phone line connection.

7. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 6, further comprising enabling a customer to listen to decoded and stored music selections one or more times on a no-charge basis prior to permanently selecting said recorded music selection that the customer desires to maintain for unrestricted playback.

8. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 7, further comprising generating a permanent enabling code for inclusion with said permanent recorded music selections to thereby enable unrestricted playback.

9. (currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising transmitting digital music content to the at least one customer households, via a direct broadcast satellite (DBS) system, said transmitting comprising: scheduling and transmitting encoded music content to a direct broadcast satellite up-link facility via a central controller and transmitting program/pricing information to said up-link facility on a periodic basis.

10. (currently amended) A device comprising:

a mechanism configured to permit at least one customer household to preselect and record transmitted music selections in a storage medium at a location of the customer;

a mechanism configured to receive transmission of multiple music selections and configured to record the received music selections in a storage medium;

a mechanism configured to enable the at least one customer household to select previously recorded music selections, that were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium, for unrestricted playback; and

a mechanism configured to automatically communicate unrestricted playback selection information regarding a previously recorded music selection, that was previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium, from the at least one customer household to a central controller system, when the previously recorded music

selection has been played a predetermined number of times at a customer location or an indication is made by the customer that the music is selected for unrestricted playback, whichever occurs first.

11. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 10, wherein said transmission of multiple music selections is via a direct broadcast satellite (DBS) system.

12. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said transmission is transmission of digital music content at a data transmission rates faster than real time.

13. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said transmission comprises music selection content availability, scheduling and content pricing data.

14. (currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said mechanism permitting the customer ~~household~~ to preselect desired transmitted music selections for recording comprises an interactive program guide mechanism enabling customers to select available digital music content and enabling the customer to select functions for recording said music content and functions for playing back recorded music content.

15. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising a decoder device configured to receive and decode transmitted music selections and associated information and store decoded music selections and associated information in a digital data storage device for temporary storage thereof.

16. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising a mechanism configured to enable remote access to said content availability, scheduling and content pricing data, said remote access is via a direct Internet access link to a website of a content provider or via phone line connection.

17. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 14, wherein said storage medium includes one selected from the group consisting: read/write CD's, write only CD's, DVD RAM, magneto-optical disc, and digital tape.

18. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 15, further comprising a mechanism configured to enable a customer to listen to decoded and stored music selections one or more times on a no-charge basis prior to permanently selecting said recorded music selections that the customer desires to maintain for unrestricted playback.

19. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 18, further comprising a mechanism configured to receive a permanent enabling code that is provided subsequent to the recording of music selections that operates in cooperation with said permanent recorded music selections to thereby enable said unrestricted playback.

20. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 16, further comprising a mechanism configured to receive music content from a direct broadcast satellite up-link facility via said central controller, and receive program/pricing information transmitted to said up-link facility on a periodic basis.

21. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said direct broadcast satellite transmission operates in the KU Band of signals frequency communication, or other suitable frequency bands.

22. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said storage medium comprises a multiple disc platter for storing multiple disks each comprising recorded stored multimedia content.

23. (previously presented) The device as claimed in Claim 11, further comprises digital content/programming transmission links including one or more selected from the group comprising: cable, optical fiber, DSL and Internet connections.

24. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the transmitted music is recorded on DVD RAM.

25. (previously presented) The system of Claim 10, wherein the recording mechanism comprises DVD RAM.

26. (currently amended) A method of distributing music to at least one customer households comprising:

permitting at least one customer household to select previously recorded music selections that were transmitted at faster than real time speeds and were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium, for unrestricted playback;

automatically communicating unrestricted playback selection information regarding the previously recorded music selections, that were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium, from the at least one customer household to a central controller system, when the previously recorded music selection has been played a predetermined number of times at a customer location or an indication is made by the customer that the music is selected for unrestricted playback, whichever occurs first; and

billing the at least one customer household for the recorded music selections that are selected for unrestricted playback.

27. (currently amended) A system comprising:

a computer-based recording, storage and playback station, said station comprising:

a first interface enabling the a customer to preselect, from the transmitted availability information, available music selections for recording;

a recording module recording transmitted music selections in a storage medium;

a second interface enabling the customer to select previously recorded music selections, that were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium, to maintain for unrestricted playback; and

an output automatically communicating unrestricted playback selection information from the user station to a central controller system, when the previously recorded music selection has been played a predetermined number of times at a customer location or an indication is made by the customer that the music is selected for unrestricted playback, whichever occurs first; and,

a billing system associated with the central controller system to bill the at least one customer household for the recorded music selections, that were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium and that are selected for unrestricted

playback, said billing based on the communicated unrestricted playback selection information.

28. (currently amended) A method of distributing music to customer households comprising:

transmitting a plurality of music selections to a plurality of customer households; providing at least one customer household with information identifying available music selections that will be transmitted;

enabling the at least one customer household to preselect and record transmitted music selections on DVD-RAM;

permitting the at least one customer household to select previously recorded music selections, that were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium, for unrestricted playback;

automatically communicating unrestricted playback selection information from the at least one customer household to a central controller system, when the previously recorded music selection has been played a predetermined number of times at a customer location or an indication is made by the customer that the music is selected for unrestricted playback, whichever occurs first; and

billing the at least one customer household for the recorded music selections that were previously recorded by the at least one customer household in the storage medium and that are selected for unrestricted playback, said billing based on the communicated unrestricted playback selection information.

29. (canceled).

30. (previously presented) The system of Claim 28, wherein the DVD RAM comprises a multidisk DVD RAM platter.

31. (currently amended) A user station for enabling unrestricted playback of previously recorded music selections, the system comprising the components of:

a first interface enabling a customer to select previously recorded music selections that were previously recorded by the customer in a storage medium, to maintain the recorded music selections for unrestricted playback;

a second interface configured to automatically communicate unrestricted playback selection information from the user station to a central controller system and for receiving enabling information for enabling unrestricted playback of the previously recorded music selections, said unrestricted playback information being communicated when the previously recorded music selection has been played a predetermined number of times at a customer location or an indication is made by the customer that the music is selected for unrestricted playback, whichever occurs first; and

a billing system associated with the central controller system to bill the customer associated with the user station for the recorded music selections that are selected for unrestricted playback based on said communicated unrestricted playback information.